<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

Please amend Claims 1, 17, 19, and 22 as follows.

1.   (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

additional information generating means for generating additional information;

adding means for repeatedly adding the additional information to image data to generate information-added data so as to make it difficult to visually identify the additional information; and

encrypting means for encrypting the information-added data to make it difficult to detect a position where the additional information is added and for outputting the encrypted information-added data to an image forming apparatus,

wherein said encrypting means encrypts the information-added data by randomly arranging ~~the information-added data~~the additional information as well as the image data.

2.   (Cancelled)

3.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encrypting means adds key information for specifying an encryption method to the encrypted information-added data.

4.   (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) the apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encrypting means arranges the information-added data on the basis of a predetermined random pattern.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the key information is information for specifying the random pattern.

7. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising the transmitting means for transmitting the image data encrypted by said encrypting means to a connected image forming apparatus.

8. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the additional information includes first information for specifying the image forming apparatus.

9. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the first information is notified from the image forming apparatus.

10. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the additional information includes second information associated with a processing environment for the image data.

11. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the second information includes information for specifying the image processing apparatus.

12.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the information for specifying the image processing apparatus includes a network ID of the image processing apparatus.

13.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the network ID is acquired in accordance with a type of network to which the image processing apparatus is connected.

14.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the information for specifying the image processing apparatus includes a user ID of the image processing apparatus.

15.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the second information includes processing date information of the image data.

16.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image data is color image data made of a plurality of color components, and said adding means adds the additional information to data of a predetermined color component of the color image data.

17.   (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

the additional information generating step of generating additional information;

the adding step of repeatedly adding the additional information to image data to generate information-added data so as to make it difficult to visually identify the additional information; and

the encrypting step of encrypting the information-added data to make it difficult to detect a position where the additional information is added and of outputting the encrypted information-added data to an image forming apparatus,

wherein said encrypting step encrypts the information-added data by randomly arranging the ~~information-added data~~the additional information as well as the image data.

18.   (Cancelled)

19.   (Currently Amended) An image processing system having an image processing apparatus connected to an image forming apparatus,

said image processing apparatus including

additional information generating means for generating additional information,

adding means for repeatedly adding the additional information to image data to generate information-added data so as to make it difficult to visually identify the additional information,

encrypting means for encrypting the information-added data to make it difficult to detect a position where the additional information is added,

wherein said encrypting means encrypts the information-added data by randomly arranging the additional information as well as the image data~~the information-added data~~, and

transmitting means for transmitting the encrypted image data to said image forming apparatus, and

said image forming apparatus including

receiving means for receiving the encrypted data transmitted from said image processing apparatus,

decrypting means for obtaining the information-added data by decrypting the received encrypted data, and

image forming means for forming a visible image on the basis of the decrypted information-added data.

20.   (Cancelled)

21.   (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 19, wherein

said encrypting means adds key information for specifying an encryption method to the encrypted information-added data, and

said decrypting means decrypts the encrypted data on the basis of the key information added by said encrypting means.

22.   (Currently Amended) A program which is executed on a computer to make the computer operate as an image processing apparatus, the program including:

a code for the additional information generating step of generating additional information;

a code for the adding step of repeatedly adding the additional information to image data to generated information-added data so as to make it difficult to visually identify the additional information; and

a code for the encrypting step of encrypting the information-added data to make it difficult to detect a position where the additional information is added, and of outputting the encrypted information-added data to an image forming apparatus,

wherein said encrypting step encrypts the information-added data by randomly arranging the additional information as well as the image data~~the information-added data~~.

23.   (Original) A storage medium storing the program defined in claim 22.